

A Compendious
NARRATION
OF THE
Most Exemplar **L I F E**
OF THE
Right Honourable and Most Vir-
tuous Lady *Mary*, Late Coun-
tess of *Shrewsbury*.

Faithfully Collected out of the Wri-
tings of a most Learned and Worthy
Person who attended her many Years :

By a Gentleman, who by reason of his
long acquaintance and much conversation
with her can testify the truth of all
that is here related.

Printed in the Year, 1677.

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Printed in the Year 1877.



Her Birth and younger years.

IT was in the year of our Lord 1599. on the 4th of *October*, that this our Island, and particularly the City of *Westminster*, was honoured by the birth of this Lady truly Noble by all Titles. It was in the house of her great Uncle by the half-bloud Sr. *Thomas Parry* Chancellor of the Dutchy, that she first began her course of mortality, which she so holily past over; and it fell out to be in a room which had been formerly a Chappel dedicated to God in honour of the most blessed Virgin *Mary* his Mother, and on the Feast of the glorious Patriark St. *Francis*; a proper time and place for the birth of a person so much addicted to passe her time in the house of God, and so true an Imitatresse of the virtues of that great Queen of Heaven,

and that humble Saint. And as this happy creature (whose life I am now exposing to publick view) was far from giving trouble to others throughout the whole course of her life, so also did she give none to my Lady her mother in her very birth, who though she had suffered hard labours of all the rest of her children, and of some of them dangerous ; yet in bringing her into the world, seemed as it were exempt by particular dispensation from that common curse layd by God upon the whole sex. Her descent was very Noble on all sides ; her father was Sir *Francis Fortescu* of *Salden* Knight of the Honourable Order of the *Bath*, a Gentleman of a very ancient knightly Family, he being an heir of *Sr. Fohn Fortescu* of the Privy Council to Queen *Elizabeth* and King *James*, and descended lineally through a race of noble Auncestors (many of whom had served their Princes in eminent charges both Military and Civil, and were allyed by their marriages

ges to several of the Nobility;) in the 15th generation from Sr. *Richard Fortescu* Knight, who came into *England* with the *Norman* conquest. Her Mother the Lady *Grace Fortescu*, as eminent for her virtue as her birth, was of the most illustrious Family of the *Mannors*, Earls of *Rutland* and Lord *Roos*, she being grandchild to *Thomas* Niece unto *Henry*, and Aunt to *Fohn*, all Earls of that place.

To this advantage of blood God had added that of so amiable, and sweet a disposition, and of so solid and lively wit and judgment, that she was grateful to all persons, and very capable of any knowledge, which her sex is wont to possess; this she made appear, in her perfect and easy learning even of those ornamental qualities, which took up the least of her thoughts, and in which (according to the fashion of other Ladies of condition in those times) she was in her younger years brought up; Though after her being married (out of her great

great modesty, and almost continual application of her self to employments of a higher strain) she never, but in just and unavoidable occasions spent any time in things of that nature.

But it is not my business here to play the Herald, and to blazon her extraction, or to dwell upon those inferior transitory advantages of flesh and blood; my aym is to paint out the ornaments of her minde, and to shew how near she was allied by her vertues to those Princes of heaven, the constant attendants on the Throne of God. Of those great virtues, which were so eminently practised by her in her riper age, she gave many auspicious prognosticks even from her infancy, her love thereof and inclination to all actions of piety growing up in her with her years, and even preventing them. No child could be more exactly dutiful to her parents, in compliance with whom she applied her self with that zealous diligence and success to the gaining of a perfect knowledge and understanding

understanding of all the mysteries and articles of her faith and duties of a Christian, as also of the grounds of all the Ceremonies used in the Holy Church, that she was capable in her very childhood of declaring and explaining them to others, and even then gave so great a testimony of so unusual a maturity of judgement both in her comportment, and all her actions, that she was thought fit, and actually had leave of judicious and learned Ghostly Fathers to receive the most Blessed Sacrament of the Altar, before she was yet arrived to ten years of age. And finally, she grew to that degree of Christian perfection even before she could write young woman, that she had an ardent desire to give over the world, as soon in a manner as she was entred into it, and dedicate her self to God by imbracing a religious life for love of him. But her parents neither giving way rashly to those desires of hers, nor daring expressly to oppose them, in regard of their great piety,

caused the case to be consulted with
 Learned Religious men ! And upon
 the casting up of all circumstances,
 wherein her delicacy of constitution,
 and continyency in point of health had
 a great part, they advised her to satisfy
 her self with leading a virtuous life in
 the way of a secular calling : where-
 upon she knowing that obedience (in
 some cases) is better then sacrifice, and
 weighing this truth in her wise heart,
 that no body (since he is a party) is fit
 to be a Judge in his own ways, applied
 her self to walk as perfectly as she
 could in that state, to which her pa-
 rents, both spiritual and temporal, ad-
 vised her : And in consequence to
 these counsels and advise, she was be-
 stowed by her friends in Marriage at
 the age of 16. upon that Noble Person
John Talbot then Esquire, and after-
 wards Earl of *Shrewsbury*, Nephew and
 Heyr to that most Saintlike and Learn-
 ed Lord, *George Earl of Shrewsbury*, who
 resolving to live wholly to God, even
 in the world (as to all mens admirati-
 on

on he did) disposed his Nephew in Marriage to this Lady, and settled his whole Estate upon them and theirs. And in that condition she lived most happily and holily (as will hereafter appear) above nineteen years.

The manner how she daily and constantly spent her whole time after she was married.

WHen once this Lady was settled in the state of Marriage, she did so order and frame the course of her life; that living here upon earth, her conversation might be truly said to be in heaven: Of this not only all her days, but even hours and moments were convincing testimonies. As soon as she rose in the morning, which was Winter and Summer at an early hour, before she thought of her dresse (the first and chief business of worldly Ladies) or spent any the least time in that or any employment or discourse whatsoever, whereunto the duty

duty of her calling did not precisely oblige her, she prostrated her self on her knees, and in that devout posture passed a full half hower with profound silence of the tongue, but with vehement affection of the heart, in offering to God that gratefull Incense of devout prayer, accompanied with acts of an ardent love of his divine Majesty, of a most sensible gratitude for all benefits, and an entire resignation of her self, and all her concerns unto his disposal, and likewise with a most hearty and zealous oblation of all her actions, thoughts, and words to his honour and Glory; and for the Petitioning part of her devotion, it aimed not at temporal blessings, but only at the obtaining of his grace to avoid sin; and rather then to incur the guilt of any that was mortal, she most constantly and earnestly supplicated him to be deprived of all worldly advantages, and pleasures whatsoever, and even of what is most dear to all mankind, life it self; which with all sincerity

cerity of heart she professed her self much readier to loose, then his grace and favour, whereof sin was only capable to dispossess her.

After this time of recollection, and a short space spent in her dress, wherein she never studied in the least degree either pomp or vanity, but kept her self within the compass of a modest decency, she repaired to her Oratory, only used for divine service, and there passed the far greatest part of the remaining time till dinner (which was usually about Noon) in prayer and such other exercises of piety as suited with that place. The Afternoon was no less piously spent then the morning, for rarely did she employ her self less then six hours during those two seasons in those holy actions in that place just before-mentioned, which was dedicated to Gods service. Her going abroad to take the ayre, (which sometimes she used to do, out of her accustomed hours of devotion, which were regular and constant,

constant, in order to her own and childrens health) never interrupted these her pious employments ; for even all that time, as far as a civil compliance with others (which she never violated) would allow of, was totally spent in them. Neither was her time of working, wherein she employ'd her self most, (except in her devotions) any distraction to her continued exercises of piety, since that employment was usually ever accompanied with the reading of some spiritual book in order to her daily advancement in virtue.

But neither prayer nor any other employment occasioned her omission of that great duty which lay upon her in looking after the government of the Family which my Lord by reason of her great prudence committed wholly to her care. For she frequently visited all the Offices of the house, both to see good orders kept, and to enquire what was wanting in any kinde : In her timely supplying whereof, as she was

most

most Conscientiously wary in avoiding all wastful expences, so was she truly generous and noble, in not suffering the meanest of the servants to want any thing, that was usually allowed to any one who served in a most plentiful house; And I am sure I may say by experience and knowledge, that this charge of hers was managed with so singular a conduct, that during her life, my Lords constant hospitality and plentiful way of house-keeping, as also the number and quality of his attendants, corresponded to the full to the greatness of his quality; And all this within the compasse of his Estate and Fortune, and according to the rules of a most orderly Christianlike discipline. And of this generous hospitality the poor were constantly in great numbers (I may say multitudes) most ample partakers.

Her time after supper before her going to rest was as religiously spent as the rest of the day; For she always was employed about an hour after her retirement

tirement to her chamber (which was de
 ever at an orderly hour) in the exami-
 nation of her conscience, and such de-
 votions, and other acts of piety as she ch
 had used at her first up-rising, and so ne
 closed the day in the same religious co
 manner as she had begun it; And this ma
 time of recollection passed so sweetly mi
 with her, that she would hardly belab
 brought to believe that it lasted above ten
 a quarter of an hour, but when it was as
 performed, she made it her business, the
 by avoyding all unnecessary distra-
 ctions, to keep her heart fix-
 ed all night upon him, with whom she sw
 had been then so devoutly parlying. ver

And she was so indefatigably con-
 stant in these her daily devotions, that
 when she was hindred, (either by me
 journeys, visiting, or receiving the
 visits of Friends, or any other just occa-
 sion,) from performing them at her ac-
 customed orderly seasons, she would
 rather deny her self time to take that
 corporal sustenance, and rob those
 hours from her rest, which her ten-
 der

as der constitution required, then ever
 willingly be guilty of any least omis-
 sion of any part of them. Even her
 childbeds and times of greatest weak-
 ness were never any bars or lets to her
 continual devout employments in such
 manner as her condition would per-
 mit. She began the first pains of her
 labour, with a most humble and peni-
 tent confession of her sins, and as soon
 as possible, after her delivery, she caused
 the Hymn of those eminent Saints and
 Doctors St. *Ambrose* and St. *Augustine*
 to be said by her, she an-
 swering alternately every other
 verse ; to the end that to Almighty
 God might be rendred most humble
 thanks for her safety , and that his
 mercy might be implored to take that
 childe into his particular care from
 whom she had received that blessing,
 esteemed one of the greatest of a Ma-
 trimonial state. And that she might
 not be totally debarred from partaking
 personally of all the Churches devoti-
 ons during her lying in, she caused
 the

the Litany to be said every evening in her chamber, and spent much of the day in glorifying God, partly by vocal, and partly by jaculatory prayers and aspirations, and all those holy exercises that were consistent with her strength and ability. And though she could not at that time till she were Churched be present at the divine service (a devotion never omitted by her at other times) nor receive the most Blessed Sacrament, yet did she not fail daily, even during the time of her being confined to her bed, to spend that whole time when that service was celebrated (which she took care to have signified to her) in prayer, with the same preparation, devotion, and application of her thoughts to those high Mysteries there commemorated, as if she had been actually present at it, and endeavouring to do it at least in a spiritual manner by disposing her self thereunto in the same way, as if she had been really to receive the effect of her longing, according to her constant

instant custome at all times, when she
 went not to this holy Communion ;
 whereunto she rarely or never omitted
 (the months of her childbed only ex-
 cepted) to have recourse twicc at least,
 or if not thrice every week ; And her
 soul did so truly relish the deliciouf-
 ness of this divine Banquet, that she
 would even have daily feasted her self
 therewith, had not her great humili-
 ty induced her to comply with those
 guides of hers in spiritual matters, who
 judged it not fit for those of a secular
 calling, since even Religious Persons
 of that sex, and of the other, Priests
 only excepted, are very rarely allowed
 that priviledge. Neither did she ever
 approach this Sacrament without an
 extraordinary devotion, having first,
 according to *St. Pauls* advise, proved
 her self by a most strict *examen* of her
 conscience, and also a most penitent
 and humble confession, as the abun-
 dance of tears, usually shed by her,
 when she frequented that Sacrament,
 might sufficiently testify, and which

often issued from her eyes in plenty when she discoursed of her own imperfections ; and she did even like another *David* water her bed with tears when her (I may truly say) too tender conscience accused her of any thing that seemed to her to carry the appearance of a sin, though it really were not such. And though all the chiefest part of her days were (as hath been sufficiently testified) spent in prayer and other pious and devout employments, yet were those of Communion passed over altogether (in good manner) in such exercises ; she usually then (as much as possible) totally withdrawing and withdrawing her self from all worldly business and conversation. And her posture in her prayers was for the most part so much upon her knees, that at her death, the knees were found as hard as any board, (like to what was said of *St. James* the Apostle) to have more resemblance with the skin of a Camel, then with that of a Lady tenderly brought up, a pious

ty she was, and had a most pure skin and
delicate constitution.

Her lively Faith and great Charity.

AMongst her other daily devotions
she never omitted to offer particu-
lar thanks to God for that great and
singular benefit of her having been
bred up in the Catholick Faith, which
she knew to be the foundation of ju-
stice and sanctity, and without which
she knew it was impossible to please
God, and that it was only to be obtain-
ed by his gift ; And therefore her soul
was always full of gratitude for that
great blessing, and she was frequent
in giving devout testimonies of it.
And so zealous was she in the professi-
on of this only true faith, that when she
heard of any that suffered death, im-
prisonment, losse of temporals, or any
other vexation for that cause, she fol-
lowing the counsel of *St. Peter*, would
glorifie God in them, and with a
pious affection and emulation lament

her own cause, for that she had never yet been thought worthy to suffer anything for confessing Christ before men, who hath so graciously promised to confess such before his Father in heaven.

Neither was this lively faith of her unaccompanied with a truly fervent Charity which as it is the Queen of all virtues, and so necessary thereto without it no other could be grateful in the sight of God, and Faith it self were dead, so was it the study of this Noble Lady to excell therein.

And though her great desire of dedicating her self to the service of Almighty God in the course of a religious life, and (that not being thought fit for her by her parents and directors) her endeavors to turn a secular life into a monastical, by her continual spending her time in exercises of piety, and so many hours daily in prayer, as hath been already related be most convincing and undeniable testimonies of her most ardent love

is divine Majesty which is the prime
 and chief branch of this greatest (if
 we may believe St. *Paul*) of the Theo-
 logical virtues ; yet for a farther evi-
 dence how streightly that pure soul of
 hers was linked to him with that gol-
 den chain of charity , she never stain-
 ed that white Stole of Innocence ,
 which she received in Baptism by the
 committing of any one mortal sin, ei-
 ther in thought , word , or deed ,
 throughout the whole course of her
 life ; and by consequence never lost
 his grace and favour during all that
 time ; And though all those who were
 acquainted with her will finde no dif-
 ficulty to believe this as a most real
 truth, (so very saint-like were her
 actions and conversation) yet is it so
 credibly attested by one who had the
 most reason of any to know the in-
 ward state of her soul, (as having had
 the guiding thereof for many years,
 and having during that time been
 made more then once partaker of all
 the passages of her life wherein her

conscience was concerned) that it cannot be brought in doubt by any reasonable person whatsoever. And her aversion was so great from offending God, that though a most tender-hearted mother, she would frequently offer up her children to his divine Majesty, humbly and earnestly supplicating him rather to take them out of the world, then ever to permit them to stain their souls with any mortal sin ; so much did she prefer his honour before the inclinations of flesh and blood , and the fulfilling of his holy Law above all the contents and comforts, which worldly people so much dote upon. Nor did her ardent love of God appear only in her avoiding of mortal sin, and her sollicitude that others should do the same, but also in her vehement desire of rendering her self eminent in the practice of all manner of virtues, meerly to please him ; and the vehemency of these desires would transport her to frequent lamenting of her own negligence

gence and tepidity, and expressing
 her sense thereof to to her spiritual
 Directour, whose assistance, and ad-
 vice she would crave in order to a to-
 tal refraining from offending God, e-
 ven by any the least imperfection, and
 now at length she might attain to
 that height of virtue that might in-
 able her to be, and continue wholly
 in his.

For his sake and for love of him
 he honourd all the saints because they
 were his faithful servants, and in the
 first place the Virgin *Mary* his most
 blessed Mother, because she before all
 others was the most grateful to him.
 He did not honour them as Gods but
 as attendants upon his throne, and
 who through the special assistance of
 his grace have attained the beatifical
 vision for all eternity; for if it be
 not only lawful but laudable, nay e-
 ven of obligation, and therefore plea-
 sing to God, to honour and reverence
 many here upon earth, who by their
 pious lives may have incurred his

high displeasure, much more grateful must it be to him who is wonderful in his Saints, to honour them whom he hath honoured, with making them co heirs with Christ, and who now are subject no more to the frailties of humane nature, continually glorifying him in that heavenly Jerusalem whereinto nothing defiled with the least spot can ever enter. And when she read their lives and actions, and saw therein how they had forsaken the world, and trampled upon the delights thereof, and dedicated themselves totally to the service of his divine Majesty, she would be as it were inflamed with a desire imitating them, and expressing her love to God, in as high and perfect a manner as they did, and would grow unsatisfied with her self for not having followed the inclinations she had in her tender age of entering into a religious state, till she was secured by those, that guided her conscience that her obedience to her parents is

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ate the choise of her course of life was
 ler more acceptable to God, (considering
 en how maturely and piously they had
 ma weighed all circumstances) then a
 an compliance with her own desires,
 t though they seemed to sway her to
 on that which carried an appearance of
 ea greater perfection. To the end there-
 in fore that she might serve him with as
 ve much perfection, and in the exactest
 ve manner that was consistent with her
 he calling, and to prevent her love to
 le him from proving cool in the least
 ed measure, she often and with great
 ic favour renewed her good purposes,
 b of all her daily pious exercises and
 c employments, and especially against
 he great and solemn Feasts, when his
 ed greatest mercies and benefits were
 al celebrated by the Church; and she
 no would be then particularly solicitous
 to crave the advise of her spiritual
 Directour, what acts of pennance or
 other devotions she should use, where-
 by to solemnize those holy times, in
 the most agreeable manner to his di-
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vine Majesty, to the end she might gain encrease of his grace, whom she with all constant gratitude owned to be so large-hearted in bestowing his favours upon all such, as begged them devoutly, and prepared themselves worthily to receive them.

In fine, so great was the love which this most pious Lady bore to her Lord and God, that it put her upon making purposes of fasts, and other austere and laborious acts of virtue, that far exceeded her strength and ability; and so little indulgent was she to her self, out of her desire to perform any thing, though never so hard, that she thought tended to his honour, on whom her love was only bent, that she was willing to look upon all those purposes as obligations in conscience, till she was assured by those who were her guides in spiritual matters, that they were not such; but that she was rather tyed from doing any thing that might be prejudicial to her health, wherein the good of many were concerned!

And

And though the same love of God prompted her to obey her spiritual Directors for his sake, who for hers and all of us was obedient to the death of the crosse, yet had the memory of those sufferings of his, such an influence upon her heart, that she was desirous to imitate him as much as she might, and carry her crosse after him according to his divine invitation, as far as her weak strength would permit; and therefore would come as near to the observation of any penitential purposes, as she was in any manner permitted; so that where fasting was denied as to the matter of the quality of her meat, she endeavoured to supply it by moderating the quantity thereof, and the abstaining from all kinde of delicacies in her diet; and the like she did in all other purposes that tended to mortification. But in all others not judged (by reason of inconsistency with health and ability) unfit, she was most zealously constant in the performance

performance of them, and particularly in her recourse unto the holy Sacraments, at certain times, when any special favour of God to her self, or this Nation in particular, or the Catholick Church in general, invited her grateful heart to expresse a resentment of his mercies.

Her Charity to her Neighbour.

FROM her most ardent love of Almighty God, and her constant desire of expressing it, proceeded her so eminent practise of that most agreeable virtue to him, (I mean) her so very exemplar Charity to her neighbours, which mounted to so great an height, that she was never fatiated with imparting all both spirituall and temporal comforts, that were possibly to be offorded by. And to descend to those particulars, which may convince this truth, she was never seen, or known to refuse an alms, when it was asked, neither was ever the

the necessity of any person represented to her, to the removal of which she did not contribute with a most cheerful and bountiful hand ; And it was a matter of complaint, and grief to her, whensoever any of her domestical servants, as sometimes it hapned, concealed the requests of any necessitous persons, although relieved by themselves ; and she was so zealously fearful of losing any occasion of feeding and cloathing Jesus Christ in his little ones, that to prevent it, she always lodged moneys in the hands of her Porter, and others, for relief of the poor, over and above that plentiful alms which was constantly given at the gates. And besides these accidental expressions of her great charity which were nevertheless very frequent, and as it were daily, she had diverse persons, her constant Penitons, whom she wholly maintained, and though sometimes by reason of her change of dwelling, they were far absent from her person, yet they were never

never so from her thoughts, for she was as sollicitously careful to see them provided for in all kinds, as if she had been expressly obliged to do it under pain of sin, and she descended so far as with the labour of her own hands to make many necessities for their cloathing, the which she also frequently did for many of her poorer servants, over and above their competent usuall allowances: she was so exact an observer of the laws of true Christian charity, that she was never willing to hear those who demanded up an alms for Gods sake suspected for counterfeits, for she was as tender in preserving their good names, as she was in relieving their necessities, and therefore as much as possible hindered the strict examination of things of that nature. And although some times some were discovered and proved to be such, yet upon consideration that the true motive of Alms was not to whom, but for whose sake it was given; she would not dismiss them without

without being made partakers of her charity : for she would urge, that most probably their great want was the true cause why they dissembled lameness, blindness, and such like infirmities, and that therefore to take away such a temptation their necessities were to be relieved. And my Lord her husband was very complying with her in this compassionate relieving of others necessities, and particularly when he was a winner at horse-races or other Divertisements, he most cheerfully, upon her suggestion and request (which she never failed to make him) employed no small part of his winnings upon these charitable offices.

Neither was her charity only expressed in relieving the pecuniary wants of the poor, but also in an extraordinary diligence to contribute to the cure and ease of the sick ; To promote which pious work, she provided her self yearly, at fit seasons, of all those medicinal things, which are usually applied to the relief of corporal infirmities ;

mities ; and she was no less careful
 in providing, then liberal in bestow-
 ing them, whenever necessity re-
 quired: and so great was her chari-
 table compassion of sick persons, that
 she not only afforded them bountiful
 remedies for their diseases, but even
 charged those servants about her own
 person not to fail of giving them all
 necessary attendance ; and to encour-
 age them in so good an action by ex-
 ample, she did frequently visit the
 meanest of her own domesticks, and
 others ; even when the loathsomeness
 of the disease, and rooms where they
 lodged, were capable to divert those
 who were indulgent, in pleasing their
 senses, from coming near them ; and
 did both minister remedies and other
 assistances with her own hands, and
 spend much time in praying by their
 bed-sides, and endeavouring to give
 them all spiritual comforts that she
 was capable of affording them.

Neither was her compassionate
 sense of the sufferance of prisoners less
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then that which she shewed to have of the wants and infirmities of others, for she was highly charitable in the relief of all those (although meer strangers) whom she heard to endure that great calamity of restraint of liberty.

All her promises made even in her young and tender age that tended to the relieving of others necessities, or might be conducing to their advantages either spiritual , or corporal , though not made with that deliberation that might oblige her (under pain) to performance, were as religiously observed as vows, and even so exactly (if not scrupulously) that she was hardly ever satisfied to have sufficiently complied with those no-way-obliging promises, without the judgment , and authority of her spiritual Directour ; and she would frequently regret her own too dull imitation of that famous patriarch

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of *Alexandria*, *John* surnamed the *Almes-giver* for his great liberality, in acts of charity.

If then Alms be of so great force and virtue, as to cleanse and purify the soul, which no Christian can doubt of that gives credit to holy Scripture, where it is said, *Give Almes and all things be clean unto you*, Luk. vi. 38. *and as water quencheth fire* so doth Almes extinguish sin; and yet the mercifull shall finde mercy, Math. 25. 7. *and he that giveth but one drop of water for the love of God shall not lose his reward*: Mar. 12. 41. *and* How pure must her soul be, whose bowels were so full of compassion, and whose hands were ever open to the poor; and what accumulated rewards shall she receive from the bounty of God, who was so merciful, and bountifull to his poor, giving cheerfully cloathing, feeding, and visiting them, or rather him in them.

For it may be truly said of this Lady, what *Job* declared of himself, that she denied not to the poor what they desired, *nor made the widdows eyes expect*, nor did she eat her bread alone, but made the poor partakers with her. This therefore being so great a truth, and so known by all that renew her, there will remain no wonder, if when she was taken out of this world, and translated to a better, there to enjoy the reward of those great virtues, which the mercy of God had plentifully infused into her happy soul. The poor people in all places where she had lived, but especially in *Worcestershire*, where by reason of her longer abode, she had met with more occasions of exercising her Charity, did generally lament their losse with all possible expressions of sorrow, as conceiving themselves by her death deprived of a most indulgent Mother; which part she truly acted to the

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life

life amongst all , whose necessities obliged them to have recourse to her assistance.

But her charity was not only exercised in relieving the corporal distresses of others, but flew an higher pitch, and made it self appear in a most ardent zeal of assisting the spiri- all wants and remedying the maladies of the soul : Her ever constant, and (as it may be truly called) inflamed desire of reclaiming all persons from sin, whom she knew it concerned, and procuring them all those helps from others, which her sex rendered her incapable to afford them in her own person, were undeniable arguments how extraordinary her zeal was of gaining souls to God.

Of this truth many of her actions of this kinde might be particularized, were it not too unnecessarily to swell this Relation with endeavouring

deavouring to make that appear, whereof all that knew her were sufficiently convinced : Howsoever, it it will not be impertinent to touch briefly upon one of these her Acts of charity, in regard Almighty God did give such a signall evidence, how grateful it was in his divine eyes, by a most wonderful, if not miraculous preservation of her from a strange and dangerous accident which followed immediately after the performance of this good work. For having been to visit a Noble Gentleman her near Kinsman, whom she knew to have sayled contrary to his judgment, by humane frailty, and to have led a life too conformable to such a failing, and having (which was the sole end of her visit) with earnest pious admonitions, and fervent prayers powred forth to God by his bed-side (to which his infirm condition had confin'd him) proved successful in her endeavours, and

wrought so good an effect, that he became a most perfect penitent, by reconciling himself to God, and so made a most happy end ; having (I say) done this most charitable work, in her Return to her own House, in a certain steep descent, near an high unfenced bridge of stone, her coach-horses grew so unruly, that one of them kick'd down the coach-man from off his box, and ran violently to the bridge, and running in their full career over it, the coach fell suddainly into the River ; and so high was the bridge, that it turned twice round in the falling, and at length lighted directly upon the wheels in the River, and in such a part of it as was shallow, though very near the deepest part, which was capable to have overwhelmed it, had it been many yards higher then it was. In the fall the foremost horses broke their tackling, and escaped the precipitation, but of the two wheel-horses

wheel-horses, both of which, fell with the coach, the one, (and he who did the main mischief by kicking down the coachman) broke his neck and was killed, the other fell with the coach without the least hurt. All those who knew this place, and particularly those who attended her, and were eye-witnesses of the accident, and saw how free from all harm their Lady and her Wayting-Gentlewoman (which was all the company she then had with her in the coach) remained after it, would not call this so total a preservation by any other Name, then that of a Miraculous deliverance; and certainly it can admit of no other interpretation, but of a malicious attempt of the Devil against her, for having got a soul out of his power (of which he had been too long possessed) and a most particular tract of the divine Providence, in rendring his malice ineffectual.

ectual. For God was only in her thoughts when she was falling (as she confessed to one who had power to ask her) she being then actually employed in making acts of love to his divine Majesty to render thanks to whom for his so highly merciful a preservation from this so great disaster, was the first thing she did after her return home, before she spoke to any one whomsoever ; she repairing immediatly to her Oratory to this most Christian-like Exercise, and there reciting with great Devotion that pious Hymn (called *Te Deum*) composed by those great Saints and Doctors of the Church St. *Ambrose*, and St. *Augustine* ; and used by all the faithful in solemn Thanksgivings to God for his blessings and manifold mercies : these her high acts of charity so universally extended, render it needless to relate how incessant the care was that she took in the instruction of her children

children in all the mysteries and
 duties of Christian Religion, which
 she would personally perform her
 self, as soon as they came to those
 years that rendred them capable
 thereof. Even as soon as they began
 to make any shew of speaking, she
 was sollicitous, that before any other
 word, they might learn to pro-
 nounce the holy, and divine name
 of *Jesus*, to which all knees bow,
 whether in Heaven or Earth, or else-
 where, and that their prayers might
 be the first discourses that they
 might use, that so they might begin
 in the first place to speak to God,
 to whom the first and chief honour
 is due; and in their Nurses arms,
 when they were at any time brought
 home, her first cares was, to signe
 them with the signe of the Cross,
 and immediately to carry them to
 her Oratory, to offer them to his
 divine Majesty and beg blessings for
 them. And as their age encreased,
 she

she did not fail to encourage them,
 no less by word then example, to
 the exercise of all virtues, and par-
 ticularly to a liberal, and compassi-
 onate relief of the poor, which
 Christ doth so expressly own as done
 to himself. Neither was she wanting
 to act the part of a Mother in this
 kinde towards the meanest of her
 servants, to whose being catechised,
 and taught all Christian duties, she
 with constant zeal contributed even
 personally, when need required,
 and of whose exact performance of
 all those Obligations to which ei-
 ther the laws of God or of his
 spouse the holy Catholick Church,
 tye her children; she was so piou-
 sly sollicitous, that they wanted nei-
 ther frequent admonitions to en-
 courage them to good, nor such re-
 prehensions as were requisite to alter
 them from all evil. And all things
 relating to the discharge of their
 domestical employments were by her
 most

most Christian-like providence so ordered, as that they might not prove any hindrance to their attending to the service of God, or rendering him all due honour, by being present at divine service, and all other holy exercises, at times appointed, by that authority which he hath left here on earth, assisted by his holy spirit, to guide and govern the spirituall kingdome of humane souls.

Seeing therefore it hath been made appear so evidently, how high and even supererrogatory a charity she shewed both in relieving the corporal necessities, and also in contributing so efficaciously to the spiritual advantages of others, It cannot certainly enter easily into the suspicion of any rational person, but that she was equally careful not to do any one the least imaginable Injury; I am sure it would be injurious to her for any person to harbour

bour such a doubt in his breast. For
 how sensibly tender her conscience
 was in all that concerned the re-
 putation of others, there are as ma-
 ny witnesses as persons, that knew
 her, who all with one mouth, avow
 that she was never heard to speak
 any the least word, that might tend
 to the diminution of the credit of
 any one whatsoever, nor ever to
 use any deriding expression or re-
 proach even in the reprehension of
 the meanest of her servants; But
 on the contrary side, her tongue
 was ever ready (how wary soever
 she was in avoyding much discourse)
 to defend the reputation, and excuse
 the faults of others against those ma-
 ny who are too apt both to misre-
 present, and misconster the actions
 of their neighbours, and too uncha-
 ritably to rip up the memory of their
 failings; And all her reprehensions
 even for the greatest faults were ac-
 cording to Christs counsel, private-
 ly

ly given, for the concealment of their imperfections, and were seasoned with so much sweetness, that her anger was not only innocent but virtuous ; And in composing all differences (which sometimes happen in such numerous Families as hers) between her servants, she was a very Angel of peace, and was exactly careful, that even those of the best quality that attended her, might do right to the very meanest without all partiality.

Her Other Virtues.

WHen good principles are laid, the consequences are generally ever clear : so that it seems a kinde of demonstration, that so lively a faith, and so exemplar a Charity as her soul was adorned with, must necessarily be accompanied with all other virtues ; so fervent a lover of God could not but take
delight

delight in the practise of all that which is agreeable in his sight. Howsoever I will endeavour briefly to shew how eminent she was in all kindes : And to begin with that rarely to be found perfection in the feminine sex of this latter age (*modesty*) ; she excelled therein in so high a degree, that her conversation and comportment , might seem commendable ever in a veiled votary, much more in one of a secular calling ; nothing ever appeared in her habit or dress , that might not merit a praise from the most scrupulous observer of the rules of that virtue : And so careful was she that none under her charge might offend therein , that she permitted not her children to read any books, without an assurance from her spiritual guides, that there was nothing in them contradictory to faith , or destructive to modesty , much lesse did she allow them either to haunt
any

any company , or use any divertisement that might in the least degree endanger the violation of that so much praised virtue by all pious persons , and particularly commended by St. *Peter* the holy Apostle in these words, that the chaste conversation of Christian Ladies was to be in *fear*, and their trimming not to be outward , as consisting in the curling of their hayr , 1 *Pet.* 3. 4. adorning themselves with curious and costly clothes, but in the inwardness of heart , which is hidden , and the incorruptibility of a *quick and modest spirit, which indeed is highly rich in the sight of God.*

Neither was her humility lesse celebrated by all that knew then her Modesty ; For she not only made appear this high virtue, truly high because so eminently practised by the highest of all Creatures, the Mother of God, in avoiding as much as possibly

sibly her condition would permit, all things either of ostentation or pomp, whether it were in apparel, or any other real vanity, and in treating all persons of what rank soever with all imaginable sweetness and affability, though without any indiscreet diminution of that dignity in which God had placed her, and which no Lady knew better how to comply with than her self, but in that quintessence of this divine virtue, humbleness of heart, which still moved her to undervalue her self, and to expresse to her ghostly Directour, so much affliction of minde, for her want of worth to merit those many blessings God had bestowed on her, both spiritual and temporal, upon account (as she would frequently urge even with abundance of tears) of her many sins and imperfections, insomuch that he was forced for her comfort to use many perswasive discourses and reasons, (which her life and

and practise rendred abundantly convincing) that she looked upon her few imperfections with magnifying glasses (for no great sins ever stained her pure soul) and not through Opticks, which made a true discovery of them.

But as this true humility of hers would not permit her to take any notice of her own virtues, but kept her heart still fixed on the consideration of her own unworthiness : (And so great did her own (small) faults appear in her own sight , that the very reflection on any the least imperfection filled her eyes with tears , and her heart with sorrow) so on the other side , no body was an higher magnifyer and esteemer of the virtues of others ; and principally when they shined in persons of High degree , and would often bewail her self for not imitating such patterns , and particularly

cularly she honoured, and frequently celebrated in her Discourse that remarkable example of great Ladies for piety, who truly trampled upon the pride and vanity of this world, the Countesse of *Arundel* (of the Lord *D'Acres* Family by birth ;) betwixt whom, and her self there had passed many Testimonies of mutual kindness. And also that most excellent Lord, the immediate Predecessor and Uncle of her Husband ; *George Earle of Shrewsbury*, of whose great perfections she was many years an eye-witness : upon whose death she forthwith repaired to her ghostly Father, not with a heart filled with joy, according to the usual strain of worldly Ladies, for the honour that was thereby descended to her, but full of a deep sense of her own unworthiness to succeed so Saintlike a person in so eminent a degree, and therefore earnestly begged the assistance of his prayers

prayers, that she might not soyle that honour by her sins, but in some small measure (at least) imitate so good a president.

Neither was she less eminent in that high virtue preferable before sacrifice (*Obedience*,) in imitation of our Blessed Saviour and divine Master, who for us was made obedient to the death of the crosse, and who (though above all laws) was for our sakes content to subject himself to humane Ordinations. And she did not only practise this virtue in so high a manner (as hath been already related) in never having been guilty of any mortal breach of his holy Commandments, but also by a most exact submission to all the Pastors and Prelates of his holy Catholick Church, to whom he hath committed the cure of souls, and those particularly, to whom by virtue of that authority she had committed

mitted the regulation of her own conscience, and spiritual concerns, with whom she frequently consulted about those matters, and never failed in a strict observance of their advises and directions.

And as to the duty of her own calling, and most punctual compliance with the obedience due from a wife to a husband, I may affirm, without being contradicted by any one that knew her (and her own constant family exceeded 60. persons) that the fault would lye at the mens door if all marriages were not happy, if all wives did but imitate her example : For as she was most prudent in offering in an humble manner such advises upon just occasion, as she judged conducing to my Lord her husbands advantage, so did she ever with all cheerfulness submit to his determination. And if he were at any time indisposed

indisposed in health, she not only expressed the tenderness of a most affectionate wife, in her sense of his infirmity, and her solicitous providing of all remedies for his recovery, but ever performed all the duties of a servant in his attendance; All which he hath with much gratitude frequently acknowledged; affirming, that during the space of above nineteen years wherein she lived his wife, she never gave him the least cause of disgust; but that he received much constant content from her agreeable and complasant conversation; and much benefit from her frequent, prudent, and pious counsels; and most of all from her exemplar practises: And I am sure no person whatsoever, whether domestick, or other, whether of the same Religion or a different, had any difficulty to believe him: For so high was the esteem of her virtues amongst all, that e-

very ones mouth was full of her praises ; And one Noble person (though of a different Religion) who made a condoling Visit to my Lord after her death , speaking in the general language , used by all , when she was the Theme of the discourse , said to him , that he had no just cause to grieve for one who *lived like a Saint upon earth , and now shined like an Angel in heaven.*

Her last sickness and Death.

AS her whole life was spent to-
tally (in a manner) in succes-
sive acts of piety , and devotion ,
so did it please Almighty God in re-
compence of her virtue , to grant
her a most happy , and Christian-
like conclusion of it. Her very last
employments , before she was confi-
ned to her dying Chamber and bed ,
was a whole night (to wit , that of
Christmasse) spent , according to
her

her custome, in acts of devotion, she then joyning like a dutiful childe with her holy Mother the Catholick Church, in celebrating the birth of the Saviour of the world, and having then with her wonted pious preparation received the holy Eucharist.

Immediately after so many hours spent in such exercises, going to retire to her rest, she found her self seised with a most unusual coldness, and with so violent an heart sickness, that she concluded it to be mortal; yet nevertheless as she had all her life shewed her self in a most exemplar manner a truly loving wife, so would she now give dying Testimonies of it; For neither would she quit my Lords chamber and Bed (which she conceived her self about to quit for good and all) nor yet give him any disturbance in it, but with all patience suppressed the

D 4

complaint

complaint of her sickness in silence, not permitting any the least noise to be made, by speech or otherwise, or her bed to be warmed, or any act of indulgence to be used to her self, that might tend to the disquieting of him, whom some indisposition had caused to retire sooner; but lay quietly, full of pains, and as full of acts of conformity to the divine will, till he awaked; then imparting to him the dangerous condition wherein she conceived her self, and with that tenderness that became so truly indulgent, and affectionate a parent, recommending her children to his favour and care, she desired in compliance with that obligation which lay upon her, to make use of those means which God hath appointed for the preservation of health, that Physicians might be sent for, which my Lord being struck to the heart with that sad Good morrow she had given him, did not fail to do with

all

all diligence, as knowing too well how much it concerned him to preserve so great a treasure.

And though she had by my Lords care the constant attendance of two or three of the ablest Doctors then in *Oxford* (*London* being at too great a distance) and that they at the beginning seemed hopeful of her recovery, and failed not in the application of all those Remedies their Art could suggest ; yet it pleased God to render their endeavours ineffectual ; for the violence of her sickness encreased so fast upon her, that according to her own opinion, who by his Divine permission had taken a righter measure of her own Infirmary then they had, it proved the means of freeing her within a few days, of all the cares that attend a transitory life.

Her pains were extream, seasing
her

her in the most sensible part (the prime seat of life) her heart , and her patience was equal ; for she was never heard to complain of , or lament her condition ; but whensoever she was asked concerning it, her only answer was, *as it pleased God* ; upon whom her heart was wholly fixed : and in continuall applications of her self to him , and in fervent prayers to implore his mercy and grace , the whole time of her sickness was spent.

On the last day whereof , being the feast of the *Holy Innocents* , she received Extream Unction with admirable devotion , being so present to her self, as to answer exactly to the Litanies, and to reach out her own hands to be annointed.

The next day being the feast of *St. Thomas of Canterbury*, that famous Martyr and Champion of the Church,

(a day that was ever wont to be spent by her in a manner totally in devotion) about six of the Clock in the morning, just precisely at the conclusion of those devout prayers (called the Recommendation of the soul) used by the Catholick Church in the last Agonies of her children, did this great Servant of God end this mortal life, giving up her soul to him, whom she ever loved, served, and obeyed with her whole heart, as hath been (I suppose) sufficiently evidenced by many most remarkable and undeniable testimonies.

And I think I may without difficulty gain credit, when I shall tell you, how universal a comfort of Lamentation there was in all that Family, at the approach of her death, when every one was considering how great a loss they were to undergoe ; not any but sensibly shared
in

in this affliction, seeing no children could have a more tender or careful Mother, no servants a more Indulgent or charitable Mistress, nor no Husband a more affectionate, and obedient Wife.

After her Death it appeared evidently to those who had the ordering of her body for buriall, that she had not only made a righter judgment of her danger, then her Physicians, but also of the quality of her Infirmary, which shewed it self by the great evacuation of blood at her mouth, to have been an Imposthume; she having several times, some years before, intimated that she conceived, that there was one gathering about, or near her heart, where she felt her greatest torment.

She lived 36 years, 2 months, and 26 days, and her Corps were with all convenient decency carried

to

to *Albrington* in *Shropshire*, a Town belonging to the now Earles of *Shrewsbury*, and the usuall place of Sepulture of that branch of that family, unto which that Earldome hath been descended these four last generations, and there it was interred in a Church dedicated to God in honour of *St. Thomas of Canterbury*, upon whose Feast she died, and laid in the self-same Vault with that of the late most Learned and holy *George* Earl of *Shrewsbury*, formerly mentioned, whose virtues she did so effectually imitate.

She left behinde her 4 Sons and 3 Daughters (having buried 2 Sons during her life) to wit, the Lord *George Tallbot*, who died in his youthful age, and inherited the heroicall spirit of his great Name, but left no issue behinde him; *Francis* the second Son, Earl after his Father, a Gentleman generally esteemed by all worthy

thy persons, and as much lamented by all such ; who hath left issue, *Charles* the present hopeful Earl, and one other Son, and a Daughter the picture both in her face and humour of her Father : *Edward* the third Son kill'd in the late Civill Wars in the service of his King at the Battle of *York* ; and *Gilbert* the fourth and youngest Son still living.

Her 3 Daughters were the Lady *Frances*, the Lady *Katherine*, and the Lady *Mary*, all were most praiseworthy for their excellent dispositions and virtuous comportments ; the two first dyed in their young age without issue ; the Lady *Mary* is still living, and hath issue one Son by her first husband (the grandchild by the Fathers side of *Thomas* Lord *Arundell* of *Wardour*, and Count Imperial, and by the Mothers of the Lord Viscount *Montacute*) and both Sons and Daughters by her second husband the brother

ther and heir apparent of *James*
Lord *Studly* and Earl of *Castle-haven*.

Gods holy Name be blessed for
having given her the Grace to leade
so holy a life, and make so happy an
end, and may we by his grace and
favour through the mercies of
Christ profit by the example of her
virtues.

F I N I S.

There are two species of ...
... and ...

God ...
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